

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A valve shield comprising a shaped sheet of material ~~adapted to be affixed~~ structured for affixing to an annulus of a cardiac valve having first and second leaflets, said sheet of material having a surface area ~~configured to match and overlie at least a portion of~~ and a surface configuration substantially matching a substantially total surface area and a substantially total surface configuration of the first leaflet of the valve, and adapted shaped complementarily to the second leaflet so as to be contacted substantially wholly contactable by a an edge portion of the second leaflet of the valve, whereby to facilitate interengagement of the second leaflet edge portion and an edge portion of the sheet of material to effect closing of the valve.

2. (Currently Amended) A valve shield according to claim 1 wherein the sheet of material ~~is adapted to prevent~~ when affixed to the cardiac valve annulus prevents prolapse of the first leaflet.

3. (Currently Amended) A valve shield according to claim 2 wherein ~~said configuration of said the~~ the shaped sheet of material total surface configuration is substantially crescent shaped.

4. (Currently Amended) A valve shield according to claim 2 wherein the ~~portion~~ total surface area of the sheet of material ~~overlying the at least a portion of the first leaflet~~ includes at least one opening therein.

5. (Currently Amended) A valve shield according to claim 2 wherein the ~~portion~~ total surface area of the sheet of material ~~overlying at least a portion of the at least one leaflet~~ is substantially solid.

6. (Currently Amended) A valve shield according to claim 2 wherein the sheet of material is ~~adapted to be~~ of a structure capable of being affixed to the annulus of the valve with sutures.

7-11 (Canceled)

12. (Original) A valve shield according to claim 2 wherein the material comprises non-biological material.

13-17 (Canceled)

18. (Currently Amended) A method for reducing regurgitation in a cardiac valve having first and second leaflets, the method comprising:

providing a valve shield comprising a shaped sheet of material having a surface area and configuration ~~to match~~ substantially matching substantially an entirety of the surface area and surface configuration of at least a portion of the first leaflet of the valve, and said the shaped sheet of material being adapted to be contacted by the having an edge configuration complementary to an edge configuration of the second leaflet of the valve; and

affixing the valve shield to the annulus of the valve so that the shield overlies the ~~portion~~ substantial entirety of the first leaflet of the valve, to facilitate closing of the valve by edge to edge contact between the shaped sheet of material edge and the edge of the second leaflet.

19. (Currently Amended) A valve shield according to claim 1 wherein said shaped sheet of material is provided with an outer periphery, ~~and is~~ at least in part shaped ~~to correspond~~ complementarily to at least a portion of the annulus of the valve.